



Happy holidays!

The holidays are already here. Who would have known that it has already been a year since the installation of officers? This past year has brought many challenges to us, and I am sure we will have more in the future. The key, though, is for us all to remember that we need to stick together.

Hopefully, Congress will do the right thing and change the 2006 provision that forces the USPS to pre-fund its future retiree health benefits (Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund) at a cost of \$5.6 billion annually. This is both unfair and unrealistic. The projection that was used by Congress to make its original decision to calculate the number of future employees is no longer relevant. The USPS has not even hired any career letter carriers in the past five to six years. So these calculations need to be changed and the Postal Service should not be forced to pay the money in a 10-year time span. It could be handled on a much longer time frame. There is definitely no rush for payment; we already have \$46.5 billion in the account.

This provision needs to be changed and Congress can correct this injustice. The internal bickering in Washington, however, is an obstacle to all of the issues facing America today, from jobs to health care, education, etc. The elected representatives need to work to resolve the problems of the country today. Delaying things causes more hardship for every American.

I hope all of the members realize the importance of being able to vote and that what happens next November in the general election will determine how the middle class and the poor of the country fare for years to come. Being registered to vote and exercising your right to vote are essential to our democracy working. Everyone needs to be registered to vote, be an activist and donate to COLCPE.

As I write this article, we are in midst of bargaining with the USPS. Our future lies somewhat in the hands of the American people and Congress. We can be successful, and we can continue to be a major player in the mailing industry as a means to effectively move America's commerce.

"What would Ben do?" That's Ben Franklin, the first postmaster general; that's whom I'm talking about. Despite the changes that have taken place in technology, I think Ben would try to capitalize on what we have and look to innovation to build our future. Instead of changing the mail standards, closing post offices and reducing delivery of mail from six to five days, Ben would look to increase services.

What do I mean by this? We have an advantage over our competitors by having delivery on Saturday and being located in every community. Cutting back and eliminating services destroys our core business. Looking for new ways to serve the American public and the business community is what we need to be striving for. One of the reasons Ben took the job as the first postmaster general was because he saw an advantage in how he could have his newspaper delivered regularly to his customers.

Why not delivery on Sunday? More and more packages are being ordered on the Internet and no one has delivery on Sunday. Why not us? This would bring in new revenue that the Postal Service does not already get. It would also satisfy customers and mailers, as what was ordered earlier in the week could be delivered by the weekend. This is just one item to consider.

It does, however, put things into context. Eliminating Saturday is not a wise idea, and the Postal Service should just abandon this thought. Congress, on the other hand, needs to fix what it broke. Ben would be shocked to learn that his post office in Philadelphia, which is a historical site, made the USPS list for consideration of closure. Schoolchildren and tourists from all over the world go there to visit each year. Hopefully, members of Congress will come to their senses and change their minds before this tragedy happens.

I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday. May there be joy, love and understanding in your heart this holiday season. ☒